

17 AUG 2003

Kadir-Flag

KADIR REGRETS PUBLIC'S RELUCTANCE TO FLY THE JALUR GEMILANG

MELAKA, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir has expressed his disappointment over the public's reluctance to fly the "Jalur Gemilang" in conjunction with the Merdeka Month celebration.

"I am very sad, it has been four years since the government changed the Merdeka celebration concept (to one month from Aug 17 until Sept 16), but many are still reluctant to fly the Jalur Gemilang," he told reporters here last night.

He said this reflected the people's lack of patriotism for the country, which ultimately could give rise to detrimental consequences.

"Love for the country should be symbolised by all regardless of race, religion, culture and political belief. We have committees at state, district and village levels but still many are reluctant to fly the national flag," he said.

Abdul Kadir said the government had conducted many campaigns including that made through the electronic and print media to encourage Malaysians to fly the national flag.

On the national-level Merdeka Month celebration campaign to be launched by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi here tonight, Abdul Kadir said preparations for the event were proceeding smoothly.

"This year's theme is to recall the scene at Padang Pahlawan on Feb 28, 1956 when (Malaysia's first prime minister) Tunku Abd Rahman returned from London to announce the date for declaration of the country's independence," he said.

He said many of the country's Merdeka veterans would be taking part and Abdullah would be escorted from Jalan Bendahara to Padang Pahlawan, a distance of five km, by bikers and flag-bearers.

Abdul Kadir said the Aug 31 National Day parade would be held in the Federal Territory of Putrajaya to symbolise the nation's gratitude to the contributions made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said 100 print and electronic media journalists worldwide had been invited to cover the parade, to be held for the first time in the federal administrative capital.

Abdul Kadir said foreign tour and travel agents were also invited to witness the occasion in efforts to make it an annual tourist attraction.

"This is an economic way of giving publicity and promoting the National Day parade round the globe," he said.

-- BERNAMA

SBS ZUL